



File Code: 2400

Date: January 21, 2005

Route To:

Subject: Implementation of the Policy Principles for Woody Biomass Utilization

To: Regional Foresters, Station Directors, Area Director, IITF Director, and WO Staff

On June 18, 2003, Secretary Ann Veneman signed the *Memorandum of Understanding on Policy Principles for Woody Biomass Utilization for Restoration and Fuel Treatments on Forests, Woodlands, and Rangelands among the Department of Agriculture, Department of Energy, and the Department of Interior* (MOU). This letter transmits that document for implementation within all offices of the USDA Forest Service.

The President signed the Healthy Forest Restoration Act (P.L. 108-148), or HFRA, which gives the USDA Forest Service new tools, increased opportunities to address forest, woodland, and rangeland health, as well as protect communities and resources from catastrophic wildfires. Title II of HFRA provides new authorities to encourage the commercial utilization of woody biomass. In addition, the National Energy Policy and the National Fire Plan 10-Year Comprehensive Strategy-Implementation Plan led by western governors, and the August 2002 White House report titled *In Response to the National Energy Policy Recommendations to Increase Renewable Energy Production on Federal Lands* all call for the increased utilization of woody biomass to meet the nation's energy needs and support the needs of local rural communities.

The message from the President, Congress, and the States is clear: priority should be given to the utilization of woody biomass by-products from restoration and fuels treatment projects wherever ecologically and economically appropriate and in accordance with the law.

It is now time for us to act. I am asking you to share this communication with forest supervisors, district rangers, and unit leaders. Please also convey the importance of implementing the policy principles contained within the Woody Biomass MOU as we proceed with our work under the National Fire Plan and the Healthy Forest Restoration Act. Regional five-year strategies for restoration of fire-adapted ecosystems should be updated to incorporate the policy principles of the MOU.

The eight policy principles of the MOU are:

- 1) **Include local communities, interested parties, and the general public in the formulation and consideration of woody biomass utilization strategies;**
- 2) **Promote public understanding of the quantity and quality of woody biomass available from federal lands and neighboring tribal, state, and private forests; as well as nationwide woodlands and rangelands;**



- 3) **Promote public understanding that woody biomass utilization can be an effective tool for restoration and fuels treatment projects;**
- 4) **Develop and apply the best scientific knowledge pertaining to woody biomass utilization and forest management practices for reducing hazardous fuels and improving forest health;**
- 5) **Encourage the sustainable development and stabilization of woody biomass utilization markets;**
- 6) **Support Indian tribes, as appropriate, in the development and establishment of woody biomass utilization within tribal communities as a way to create jobs, establish infrastructure, and support new economic opportunities;**
- 7) **Explore opportunities to provide a reliable, sustainable supply of woody biomass; and**
- 8) **Develop and apply meaningful measures of successful outcomes in woody biomass utilization.**

Please see the enclosure for: MOU between the FS/BLM; and Biomass Energy Target for Regional Foresters in FY 2005.

For further information about this letter, the MOU or the biomass policy, please contact Ed Gee, Forest Management staff, 202-205-1787; Fred Deneke, Cooperative Forestry, 202-205-1612; Bryce Stokes, Research and Development, 705-605-5263; Sue Stewart, Fuels Management staff, 202-205-1129.

/s/ Sally Collins (for)
DALE N. BOSWORTH
Chief

cc: Bill Timko, Richard Fitzgerald, Edmund A Gee, Fred Deneke, Bryce Stokes, Susan A Stewart, Loren B Ford